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The place where streams seek ground. Towards a new territorial governmentality: the meaning and usage of the concept of territorial cohesion in the European Union

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Part III Territorial cohesion discourse



James (in Gregory, 1970) *Dalmatian*

Introduction

This Part III of the discourse analysis of the concept of territorial cohesion is concerned with the third sub-question of this research: how do the concept's meaning and usage relate? It thus in a discourse analytical way wants to understand what the meanings of territorial cohesion and usages of the concept mean. However, there neither appears a system of territorial cohesion knowledge (see Part I) nor a certainty about the concept's power practices (see Part II). As the territorial cohesion discourse consists of both, one might ask why then to even embark upon the *tour de force* of recognising the rules that regulate it.

Gestalt psychology answers that emergence is the process of complex pattern formation from simpler rules (Marr, 1982). You for instance do not recognise the Dalmatian pictured above by first identifying its parts (e.g. feet, ears), but by perceiving the dog as a whole, all at once, after which you can infer its component parts. Similarly, it is at the end of the interpretations of this research's discourse analysis that the descriptions, insights, and explanations of events come forward to reveal 'the system of interpretations and meaning, and the structuring and organizing processes' (Gioa&Pitre, 1990: 587). That is to say, the possible formation of the system of territorial cohesion knowledge and the concept's power practices (of which much might still be blank, just as the pictured Dalmatian) could emerge when – not these two parts, but – the whole of the territorial cohesion discourse itself is demarcated by simpler rules.

Although you cannot grasp the concept's *episteme* and power practices from its intellectual and political positions themselves separately seen, these territorial cohesion pro/positions are nonetheless just as visible as the points of the picture above. On the one side the mapped meanings bring forward the conceptualisation

of knowledge validity and a kaleidoscope of knowledge forms points towards truth criteria with a gaze of delineated objects and limits of politics. On the other side the field of interest is mapped out. The former thereby demonstrates intellectual randomness and the latter that “subjective” preference determines the concept’s usage. The reconstruction of territorial cohesion’s interwoven power-rationality therefore revolves around these two arbitrarinesses.

This “territorial cohesion creature” is demarcated by interpreting the limits that place meanings and powers in- and outside a discourse. By using the “3D glasses” of discourse analysis (with a “blue and red glass”; see §7.2.1) we can draw the “blue and red” lines that connect the concept’s intellectual propositions on the one side and its political positions on the other. In doing so, not the whole of a two-dimensional image emerges (e.g. the Dalmatian above), but the whole of a three-dimensional “battle arena”. Also the territorial cohesion discourse is namely a nodal point that mediates between text *an sich* and its social context. Politics and science share this discourse, and the link between them thus lies in their dependence on the same concept. Chapter 16 below therefore presents the discursive interdependencies between territorial cohesion pro/positions out of which the concept’s possibilities of articulation emerge.

Chapter 17 then presents the territorial cohesion discourse as a domain of statements governed by rules that point out the necessary and forbidden articulations. This is the main outcome of this research’s discourse analysis: the individualised structure of rules of formation of the territorial cohesion discourse. These rules are hypothetical though, especially because the discourse is in the making and thus not yet crystallised. In this creative phase no territorial cohesion knowledge stratified yet and the concept’s usage is essentially contested. Moreover, even though the concept might be central in the political debate, territorial cohesion could be a composite discourse (i.e. consisting of multiple discourses). By using the *Discursive Nodal Point*-perspective, the network of discursive interdependencies can be structured nonetheless. This allows us to grasp the commonalities in how (discursive) practices in various ways relate territorial cohesion pro/positions.

Still, it would come as no surprise if the Conclusion of this research’s discourse analysis proposed in Part IV is vague (i.e. not specific at all), simplifying (i.e. it does not do justice to the contemporary chaotic truth of territorial cohesion) and not very structuring (i.e. there is not a single leading structure or finite multitude of leading structures found). Yet, this does not prohibit this research from reaching its objective: setting up the rules that demarcate the concept’s hermeneutic horizon. What is more, the discourse analysis illuminates enough to be able to critique territorial cohesion for its internal tensions and its exclusion of certain issues and themes nonetheless (Jensen&Richardson, 2003).
